

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

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LUTHERANS DISCUSS UNITY IN JAPAN

Lutheran unity in Japan was the main topic of discussion at the All Lutheran Free Conference meeting in Nara on Oct. 14-15. The meeting was attended by 90 of the 250 Lutheran missionaries in Japan, representing 10 mission groups from 3 countries. Rev. K. Hirai, representing the Japan Lutheran Church; Rev. W.J. Danker, Missouri Synod Japan Mission; Rev. Olaf Hansen, Evangelical Lutheran Church; and Rev. Anders Hoaas, Norwegian Lutheran Mission, presented papers dealing with the problems involved in unification.

Mr. Hirai, speaking for the executive committee of the JLC emphasized that the JLC feels it highly desirable that all the Lutheran missions be united in their work in Japan. Lutheran development in Japan is being hampered, the JLC contends, by the sense of confusion which the enquirer feels when confronted by so many kinds of Lutherans here. At present, the Lutheran missions, 8 of which have had work in Japan only since the war, have a comity agreement whereby their work is centered in different geographical areas. Three of the Mission groups (Augustana Lutheran Mission, the Lutheran Evangelical Association of Finland, and the United Lutheran Church in America) have already integrated their work with that of the Japan Lutheran Church. The JLC was originally founded by the United Lutheran Church in America.

Mr. Danker made a strong doctrinal presentation of the difficulties involved in union, while Mr. Vikner spoke on Christian realism in relation to the task of establishing the church. Mr. Hansen expressed the misgivings of the ELC Mission about entering into a unity which would not preserve a measure of integrity of the cooperating groups, and Mr. Hoaas emphasized the 3 principles of the reformation with the contention that unity without uniformity is possible.

The conference set up a study committee composed of 2 representatives from each mission and from the JLC with David Vikner as convener, which will try to evolve a possible doctrinal basis for unity and a formula of union. The Committee, whose members are not yet chosen, will present a report to the various groups for approval early next year. The next conference meeting will be held in the spring.

Out the business meeting, Rev. Sigurd Aske was elected chairman of the Conference for the coming year. Rev. P. Parker Anspach will serve as secretary, with Leif Salmonsens as Statistical Secretary. Norman Olson will continue as treasurer. Special mention was made of the contributions of

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the Lutheran Hour, which is heard on a nationwide hookup, and the Lutheran Bible School in Kobe.

The Japan Lutheran Theological Quarterly, which now carries an English section, will publish a complete report of the conference in the fall issue, including the texts of the speeches.

KYODAN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HOLDS MEETING

A clarification of the status of missionaries working with the Kyodan, and the year's financial report were the main items of business at the Kyodan Executive Committee meeting Oct. 20-22 at Katase. The regulations regarding missionaries were drawn up primarily to define the relationship of Kyodan missionaries to the Japanese Church at the local, or district, level. The rules provide for registration with the Kyodan of missionaries sent out by IBC Boards or by Boards cooperating with the Kyodan. Following the formality of registration, the missionary will be classified according to occupation: if ordained; as a minister of a church, a travelling minister, a seminary professor, or a teaching minister position; if unordained and engaged in evangelistic work; as an unordained. These categories are the same as those applying to Japanese ministers of the Kyodan, and will give the missionary the same type of membership in the district assembly as a Japanese pastor of similar occupation. Confusion about the exact position of the missionary in the district assembly has occasionally existed in the past, and it is expected that these regulations will clarify the situation.

The financial report for 1953 showed a total budget of 276 million yen (\$760,000), of which 176 million yen was used locally, and 100 million yen allocated to the central offices. The Japanese church raised 83% or 229 million while 17% or 47 million yen (\$131,000) came from abroad. All of the funds from abroad were for central operating expenses, and of these 30% was used for church building and reconstruction, so that the church was completely self-supporting on the local level, and self-supporting with regard to regular administrative expenses except for 33 million yen or \$92,000. Other expenditures included 20 million for direct evangelism, 24 million yen for publications, and 17 million yen for conferences and committee meetings (including costs of transportation).

A continuation committee of the Executive Committee will continue to work on the following problems: 1. Fostering greater unity among the Kyodan churches, 2. Placing ministers so that more support will be given to pioneer evangelism, 3. The mission of the church and the social situation with the hope of promoting greater understanding of the present age, more responsibility toward social conditions, and a theological interpretation for the post-war era in Japan.

The Flood Relief Program financial report showed expenditures of 3½ million yen, of which 54% was raised indigently. Another appeal for help will be made, since the extent of flood damage was much greater than originally anticipated, and included the Chubu and Kyoto areas, as well as Kyushu. The delegates from Kyushu expressed the deep appreciation of their districts for the prompt and efficient way in which the Kyodan had acted to give relief in time of disaster.

UNITED NATIONS REFUGEE REPRESENTATIVE IN JAPAN

Mr. Aamir Ali, Far East Representative for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, arrived in Japan on Oct. 17 from Bangkok. He

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will spend 3 weeks here working on the refugee problem in the far east.

Japan, according to Mr. Ali, has admitted more China refugees than any other Asian country, with 97 out of 200 applications already cleared for admission. Mr. Ali and Mr. Hallam Shorrocks, NCC Service to Refugees representative, are in the process of holding conferences with Japan that admission can be granted to others of the over 20,000 White Russian stateless persons who still wish to leave China.

The UN Commission, Mr. Ali points out, does not actually move the refugees itself, but furnishes money to a number of voluntary agencies whom it aids in making negotiations for the transfer of refugees. The voluntary agencies handle the actual details of the moving. Of these agencies, the World Council of Churches is one of the largest now working with the UN High Commission in Geneva.

SOUTHERN BAPTIST REPRESENTATIVES VISIT JAPAN

The Southern Baptist Church in the U.S. has sent Miss Juliet Merther, Miss Josephine Jones, and Miss Ione Grey to Japan to study the situation of the church here. Miss Merther and Miss Grey are chief editor and associate editor, respectively, of Southern Baptist Publications, and Miss Jones is the Secretary of the Womens' Department of the Baptist Church in Florida. They will address a special women's meeting at Keisen Baptist Church on Oct. 29. Following their tour of Japan the group will go to Korea.

The Southern Baptists are also holding a special evangelism campaign this month, during which their various churches in Japan will exchange ministers with each other.

EPISCOPAL CHURCH DEDICATES NEW HEADQUARTERS

A group of 200 bishops, ministers and representative laymen attended the dedication of the new headquarters of the Episcopal Church in Japan on October 13. The 10 million yen building, located in Shibuya Ku, Tokiwamatsu Cho, has been under construction since July.

JAPAN CHRISTIAN YEARBOOK FOR 1953 NOW AVAILABLE

The 1953 Japan Christian Yearbook is off the press and available for 680 yen (\$2.00) from Kyo Bun Kwan (Christian Literature Society of Japan) 2, Ginza 4-chome, Chuo-ku, Tokyo.

The yearbook contains excellent summaries of the political, economic, and social situations in Japan in 1952, as well as a survey of the activities of the Non-Christian religions during the past year. A rather complete review of the Christian movement in Japan thru 1952 in all its various aspects is offered by qualified workers in each field. Space is also devoted to explanations of the activities of the cooperative protestant groups here. Reports from the various protestant Christian organizations at work in Japan occupy 150 pages of the 500 page volume. The Yearbook provides in addition to this a complete directory of missions and missionaries at work in Japan.

NCC LITERATURE DEPT. HOLDS NOVEL CONTEST

Seventy-six original manuscripts were received in the 2nd annual Christian Novel Contest sponsored by the Literature Dept. of the NCC. This represents a great increase in interest in the competition, over

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last year when only 45 were received. Prizes of 20,000 yen, 10,000 yen, and 5,000 yen are being offered to the writers of the 3 best novels (Japanese language) dealing with Christianity. The purpose of the contest is to encourage Christian writers, and to promote the publication of more Christian fiction. The winners will be announced in December.

CHRISTIAN LITERATURE WEEKS PUBLICIZED

The Christian Literature Weeks program of the NCC is receiving publicity in 10 daily Japanese language papers, and in 6 Book review journals as a result of meetings which Rev. Ebisawa, Mr. Miyakoda and Mrs. Muraoka have held with reporters. This is a sharp departure from the disinterested attitude with which the Japanese press has greeted past NCC attempts for press conferences, and, it is felt, is an encouraging sign for the future.

The Literature Weeks program will be emphasized again at a meeting of writers, publishers and literature evangelists on Oct. 30, at which Mrs. Muraoka will speak.

NCC DELEGATES TO OKINAWA

A small group of delegates from the Church Education Dept. of the NCC will go to Okinawa in November to take 700,000 yen worth of stationery and paper to the churches and Sunday schools there. Okinawa is currently suffering from a paper shortage which is hampering the work of evangelism.

